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REVIEW OF CROSS-SECTORAL CLUSTERS: ROLE OF MAJOR GROUPS, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO AGENDA 21, CHAPTERS 23-32

Draft decision submitted by the Chairman

Major groups (chapters 23-32 of Agenda 21)

1. The Commission on Sustainable Development:

(a) Welcomed the contributions of major groups to its fourth session and their continued participation in Agenda 21 follow-up at the local, national, regional and international levels. Their commitment to sustainable development objectives strengthens the Commission's work and efforts in this direction throughout the world;

(b) Also welcomed the work of the major group sectors in preparing the Day of the Workplace and the youth panel/exhibition for the fourth session of the Commission. The Commission also welcomed the financial and other support provided by Governments and international organizations to these special events and called on Governments, international organizations and the private sector to continue assisting through these activities in the preparations for future events;

(c) Underlined the positive experience gained from the special events focusing on particular major groups and recognized that the success of these events was due in part to the partnerships catalysed among the major group partners and their networks;

(d) Welcomed General Assembly resolution 50/113 in which the Assembly recognized the important role played by major groups at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and in the implementation of its recommendations and recognized the need for their active involvement in

preparations for the special session, as well as the need to ensure appropriate arrangements for their contribution during the special session;

(e) Recognizing the important contribution by all major groups on issues related to sustainable development, invites their active participation both during the preparations for and at both the 1997 session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the 1997 special session of the General Assembly for the five-year comprehensive review of Agenda 21;

(f) Welcomed the initiative of the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, together with the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the United Nations Secretariat, to assess the state of local Agenda 21 initiatives through a world-wide survey, and invited Governments and the national sustainable development coordination institutions to give their full support in gathering this valuable information for the 1997 review process;

(g) Emphasized the need to preserve and expand major group participation, as appropriate, in the Commission on Sustainable Development and in relevant international organizations whose work is an essential part of the Agenda 21 follow-up process;

(h) Recognizing the efforts of major groups organizations, in particular non-governmental organizations, in mobilizing technical and financial assistance to support the sustainable development initiatives of developing countries, encouraged further action in this regard, particularly by those organizations that are able to effect such action.

2. The Commission therefore:

(a) Encourages all parties to uphold the objective of partnership in their collaboration with major groups at all levels and in preparation for the special events that may be organized in the context of the 1997 review;

(b) Encourages Governments and international organizations to actively support the initiatives of major groups aiming to make contributions to the 1997 review;

(c) Encourages Governments to involve major groups representatives in the preparations for the 1997 review process at the national level and to favourably consider including major group representatives in national delegations to the fifth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, and, as appropriate and in accordance with the appropriate rules of procedure, to the special session of the General Assembly in June 1997;

(d) Supports the recommendations agreed to at the second session 1/ and the third session 2/ of the Commission and endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in its decisions 1994/300 and 1995/235 concerning the accreditation of non-governmental organizations to the Commission, and recommends that the Council, at its substantive session of 1996, decide to keep those non-governmental organizations accredited to the Commission by Council decision 1993/220 on the Roster, as envisaged in Council decision 1993/215;

(e) Invites the General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, to ensure, in conformity with Assembly resolution 50/113, appropriate arrangements for the most effective contribution to and active involvement of major groups, including non-governmental organizations, in the special session of the Assembly in 1997;

(f) Requests United Nations organizations to foster the emerging trends towards greater openness and transparency with respect to major groups, and calls upon them, as appropriate, to broaden the scope of their cooperation with major groups;

(g) Requests major groups to report to the Commission on Sustainable Development on positive examples of recent international meetings, conferences and panels where innovative approaches to major group participation have been taken;

(h) Emphasizes the need to achieve comprehensive reporting as well as independent assessments as prepared by major groups, and requests the secretariat of the Commission as well as other United Nations bodies to maintain continuous collaboration with major groups;

(i) Requests further efforts by Governments, United Nations organizations and other bodies to develop simple and accessible information materials related to Agenda 21 so as to assist people at the local level in taking a more active role both in assessing social, economic and environmental conditions, and in participating in decision-making processes for sustainable development at the local level.

1/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1994, Supplement No. 13 (E/1994/33/Rev.1), chap. I, para. 21 (a).

2/ Ibid., 1995, Supplement No. 12 (E/1995/32), chap. I, para. 26.